

Knowledge and Practice on Early Breastfeeding Initiation Among Postpartum Mothers at Amana Hospital, Tanzania.

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Abstract: BACKGROUND: Early breastfeeding initiation refers to putting the newborn to the breast within 1 hour of birth. However, rates of exclusive breastfeeding are low both globally (42%) and in Tanzania (51%). **AIM:** To assess knowledge about, attitudes toward, and practice of early breastfeeding initiation among postpartal mothers in Tanzania. **METHODS:** This study used a cross-sectional design. Simple random sampling was used to recruit 100 postpartal mothers who had delivered within the previous 48 hours at Amana Regional Referral Hospital, which is in the Eastern zone of Tanzania. **FINDINGS:** Of the participating postpartal mothers, 65% were knowledgeable about early breastfeeding initiation and the remaining 35% were not knowledgeable. Most mothers (62%) had positive attitudes toward early breastfeeding initiation, and 38% had negative attitudes. Furthermore, 45% of participating mothers had initiated early breastfeeding (within 1 hour), whereas 55% had delayed initiation of early breastfeeding (after 1 hour). Mothers' age was positively associated with knowledge about breastfeeding ($p = .048$), but the association between knowledge about early breastfeeding and education was non-significant ($p = .514$). Associations between attitude toward early breastfeeding and age and education were also nonsignificant ($p = 1.000$ and $p = .132$, respectively). Furthermore, associations between the practice of early breastfeeding and age and education were nonsignificant ($p = 1.000$ and $p = .204$, respectively). **CONCLUSION:** Postpartal mothers may benefit from being informed

about the health benefits of early initiation of breastfeeding after delivery for both mother and baby. Improving their knowledge and attitudes toward this practice may help to avoid unnecessary morbidity and mortality among newborns.